

BMI Measurement in Washington State

Background: During the August 20, 2014 meeting of the Prevention workgroup, members requested that we determine what BMI information is available through the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, RWJF County Rankings, and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System for the State of Washington.

Summary: The Washington State Department of Health uses BMI information collected from the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for adults and the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) for students in 8th, 10th and 12th grade to create obesity rates for the state and WA counties as a part of its Health of Washington State Report. The report follows the definition of obesity used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): CDC defines obesity as a BMI of 30 or higher. Since 2002, the HYS has been administered bi-annually in October of even years. Data are generally available in February following the October administration.¹ The questions included in the surveys are below. Washington generally does not participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.²

2013 BRFSS Questionnaire³ (collected annually):

8.11 About how much do you weigh without shoes?

8.12 About how tall are you without shoes?

2012 Healthy Youth Survey⁴ (collected in October of even years):

- How tall are you without your shoes on?
- How much do you weigh without your shoes on?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation also calculates BMI and reports the rate of adults with a BMI ≥ 30 at the county level in Washington as a part of its County Health Rankings & Roadmaps.⁵ This information also comes from the BRFSS.⁶

¹ For more information about how Washington uses these surveys, please see:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5500/AppB.pdf>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/history-states.htm>

³ http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/questionnaires/pdf-ques/2013%20BRFSS_English.pdf

⁴ <http://www.askhys.net/FactSheets/Reference12?sheet=WeightAndObesity>

⁵ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/#!/washington/2014/measure/factors/11/map>

⁶ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/faq-page#t83n19377>